

*Saskatchewan
Rural
Telephone
Companies
Association*



*Minutes of
1953 Convention*

The annual convention of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Telephones was held in Prince Albert, City Hall Chambers, on July 10th, 1953. Prior to the convention the Directors met at 10:00 a.m., to adopt an agenda and discuss certain telephone problems.

At 11:00 a.m. the President, Mr F. Randall, formally opened the convention and welcomed the 120 delegates. He felt especially pleased that quite a few new companies were represented. He mentioned that there are about 1,000 rural companies. Whilst membership was increasing slowly yet steadily he felt that more companies should be members, since all rurals reap the benefits; but do not assist financially. The President was of the opinion that until more companies forwarded membership fees that the Association was unable to embark on organization and related telephone questions and problems due to a lack of funds. He repeated that membership fees are very reasonable; only fifty cents per rural circuit. Minimum \$2.00. Maximum \$10.00. Plus exchange. Since printed copies of the 1952 convention were handed to all he requested that the delegates should read them over during the lunch hour.

The financial statment was read:

Statement of Receipts and Payments

for the period of July 1, 1952 to June 30, 1953:

Receipts

| | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Membership Fees | \$ 385.60 | |
| Interest | 5.00 | |
| | | <hr/> |
| Total Receipts | \$ 390.60 | |
| Bank Balance July 1, 1952 | \$567.02 | |
| Dominion of Canada Bond .. | 50.00 | 617.02 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | \$1,007.62 |

Payments

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Directors' Travel Expenses .. | 110.00 | |
| Printing, postage, stationery .. | 61.57 | |
| Secretary's Salary 1952-53 | 100.00 | |
| Stenographic services | 7.50 | |
| Hall rent | 25.00 | |
| Audit | 5.00 | |
| Sundry, cash box | 2.77 | |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | 315.04 |
| | | <hr/> |
| Total Payments | | 315.04 |
| Bank Balance June 30, 1953 | 642.58 | |
| Dominion of Canada Bond .. | 50.00 | 692.58 |
| | | <hr/> |
| | | \$1,007.62 |

Moved and seconded that the financial statement be accepted and filed. Carried.

Q:—Are all rural telephone companies members of this association?

A:—No -- but they should be members.

Convention recessed for lunch.

Reconvened at 1:30 p.m.

The chairman asked if delegates had read the minutes and if they were found correct.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes be received and adopted as read.

Resolutions Committee:

Moved and seconded that the chairman appoint the resolutions committee. Carried.

The following were appointed:

Mr. Fritshaw of Fern Glen Rural Tele. Co.

Mrs Pierce of Merrill Rural Tele. Co.

Geo. Furneaux of Nipawin Rural Tele. Co.

Mr. Polkinghorne of Manitou Lake

Rural Telephone Company.

The first appointee to be its chairman.

The President then introduced the following guests to the convention:

Mr. S. R. Muirhead;

Deputy Minister of Telephones.

Mr. T. E. Cavanagh;

Superintendent of Rurals.

Mr. J. H. Purdy;

Superintendent, Commercial Branch.

Mr. A. Scott;

Workmen's Compensation Board.

Mr. S. B. Medhurst;

District Superintendent, Saskatoon.

Mr. S. H. R. Pipe;

District Superintendent, Prince Albert.

The chairman asked the Deputy Minister to address the convention. Mr. Muirhead stated he would be very brief. That he was pleased to attend the convention; to listen to the discussions, opinions, problems and matters presented in resolutions. That he would be glad to help in any manner and at any time. He felt much useful knowledge and information could be gathered by all those attending.

Mr. Cavanagh was the next speaker. He spoke mainly on power interference on rural line grounded circuits. He said that lines should be free from ground and trees. That 95% of the trouble is due to bad joints. Better maintenance must be established to prevent this. Ground rods should be checked. Rods should not be too close to the foundations of a house. Specifications regarding rods would be sent out on request to his department.

Mr. Purdy expressed his pleasure at being invited to attend the convention. He was here to listen and answer questions re: matters pertaining to his department.

Mr. Medhurst stated he was glad to attend to get first hand information on problems, and expressed his willingness to help in any way he could.

Mr. Pipe thanked the delegates for their kind remembrance of him when he was in the hospital during convention time two years ago. He thought such meetings were a very good thing.

Mr. Scott spoke on the subject of collections. He informed the delegates that there were no changes in the Workmen's Compensation Act so far as assessments were concerned. Assessments had increased from \$3,000.00 to \$4,000.00 a year. There had been a 25% increase in accidents and it had been necessary to adjudicate some of the claims. He pointed out that most accidents do not happen while the party is employed; but have happened some time previously. It is necessary, therefore, to be very careful when questioning an employee. He asked that all rural telephone companies help in the prevention of accidents.

Q:—Are the rates being charged the telephone companies sufficiently high to give reasonable compensation to employees who are injured?

A:—I would say they were, yes.

Q:—Upon what basis do they pay compensation?

A:—They pay by the instrument, i.e. 25 cents per instrument.

Q:—We hire casual labour from time to time. We had one chap worked twelve days and he was spiked. On crutches for three weeks and he was very dissatisfied with the compensation received.

A:—Form is sent to be filled in as to wages for the four weeks before.

Compensation based on this:

Re: Runoff going through trees. Question raised as to policy where necessary to cut trees, trim off limbs, etc., -- can this be done without the permission of the owner? Reply by the chairman: Yes, but this was not good policy. Better to ask the owner for permission. Farmers have spent lots of time planting, watering and caring for the trees. Oftentimes considerable money has been spent invested in trees by people.

Re: compensation from the Provincial Government for raising telephone lines to allow for clearance for machinery used in the exploration and development of oil fields in this Province. Mr. Sutton suggested that Mr. Cavanagh's department draw up a resolution in

this regard and forward it to the Department of Natural Resources. Mr. Cavanagh thought the resolution should come from the association. It would be more effective than from one department of the government to another. Finally Mr. Sutton was requested by the chairman to draw up a resolution and give it to the resolution's committee for them to report later.

Discussion on dead land. A delegate was of the opinion they needed this land for taxation purposes, but wondered if they would be farther ahead to take this land out and forget all about it. Reply by Mr. Cavanagh: You have answered your own question. If you do remove it then you will have to remove the taxes.

Discussion on the removal of salvage: Oftentimes if such lines are left unused and unserved then usually they disappear by slow degrees. Thus each company must decide what action should be taken. Regarding the burning of poles by farmers. Should they be charged with replacement or costs? Reply: Each company must decide what action should be taken. How close should telephone lines be placed to power lines? Mr. Cavanagh replied they should be kept in the clear and away from them if you can. The farther away from the power line the better it is.

A delegate requested information regarding the 48 hour week of an operator. Is she entitled to double time if she works on Sunday. Reply: Must have one days rest in seven. The 48 hour week must be worked within the six days.

Re: minimum wage for telephone operators. Generally agreed that beginner operators should undergo an apprenticeship, before becoming subject to the Minimum Wages Act.

A delegate wanted information re: "telephones for lands with low assessment -- far from hospital, etc. Surely something should be done for such areas and people by way of telephone service." Have to guarantee the debentures themselves. "Wrote to the Department at Regina to see if they could solve the problem some way; or could the Government build the main line out to these farms. No answer from the Department; did not appear to be interested."

Mr. Cavanagh said he had no knowledge of any contribution ever having been made in such cases in this province. The Government helps in any way they can, e.g. by sending a man out to the farmer group without costs, but cannot make any direct contribution or guarantee debentures.

Question raised where trouble in system on certain circuit calling other exchange and have it checked. Are we entitled to that service? Reply: If trouble, our man, if located there, will fix it at once; or as soon as possible, if not located there. It is definitely our responsibility to test any line in trouble or system or our system.

Question addressed to Mr. Cavanagh. A delegate remarked that his company desired to obtain some telephone poles from a long distance line being renovated. Contractors and farmers bought these poles. "Shouldn't we get some priority?". Reply: Pretty hard to give a definite answer. We certainly want to fix up the telephone companies. It would look as if other people had spoken about buying them first. Telephone companies, however, would get first chance. That has always been our policy.

Resolutions:

1. Section 9, subsection 3, of the Rural Telephone Companies Act be amended so that telephone companies may charge a new subscriber on an existing line the full cost of such installation including the materials. After discussion moved and seconded that the resolution be adopted. Carried.

2. Marshall: That whereas the Department of Natural Resources is the most interested department in the oil field development, and, whereas the development of these oil fields necessitates alterations in telephone lines to give clearance of ingress and egress, therefore, be it resolved, that the Department of Natural Resources should pay for the cost of such alterations to the interested rural telephone company. Carried.

3. Punnichy: Whereas there are a number of towns and villages in the province whose telephone service is handled by a central in an adjoining town at some distance, these points pay a heavier rental because of the extra wear and maintainance of this long line, therefore, be it resolved, that this meeting go on record as being in favor of the Department of Telephones equalizing the rates of rental at all points regardless of whether there is an exchange at that point or not. Lost.

4. That whereas the Minimum Wages Act has been amended to cover all -- and whereas this makes the operation of the smaller telephone companies very difficult, therefore, be it resolved that the Act be so amended that only an operator that has at least six months experience. Carried.

5. That the Minimum Wages Act be amended that the deduction for board be raised from \$26.00 to a figure more in line with the cost of living. Carried.

6. Be it resolved that the Assiniboia Rural Telephone Company request the Association to deal with the matter of the incorporation of busy signals on rural telephone lines. Mr. Purdy speaking on this resolution said he was not clear on the meaning and intent of this resolution. But we will look into the matter. Tabled.

Mayor Cuelenaere arrived and addressed the meeting briefly with suitable welcome.

Q:—It has been rumoured around that our exchange was going to be raised, that is the fee, another dollar.

The Deputy Minister replied that: Rural fees are going to be raised one dollar per year effective the first of January next. There was an announcement made about this. There are two or three places in the province where it will be two dollars. It was all due to the higher costs of materials, etc., and gave some statistics to prove.

Q:—May rural telephone companies put their money into credit unions?

A:—Some consideration has been given to it by departmental officials, but so far have not arrived at a decision. Under the Act such funds can only be put into chartered banks.

Q:—Item 7 of the minutes of the 1952 convention reads; "That the following resolution be taken up by every delegate with their respective companies to arrive at a conclusion to be presented to the meeting next year" that there should be a superannuation scheme with rural companies--".

After some discussion it was moved and seconded that this recommendation be tabled. Carried.

Convention place 1954:

Nominees: Saskatoon, Humboldt, Asquith, Prince Albert and Melfort. Result of ballot: Saskatoon.

Election of Officers:

Mr. Muirhead in the chair during the election for President.

Nominated: F. Randall, Tisdale, Sask.

No other nominations. the chairman declared Mr. Randall re-elected by acclamation.

Vice President: M. Fritshaw, Tisdale.

No further nominations, Mr. Fritshaw declared re-elected by acclamation.

Directors:

Geo. H. Furneaux - - - - - Nipawin, Sask.
 H. B. Polkinghorne - - - - - Marsden, Sask.
 H. Youngwirth, Box 388, Prince Albert, Sask.
 M. Scramstad - - - - - Hendon, Sask.
 W. G. Streeton, Sr. - - - - - Plunkett, Sask.
 John Larson - - - - - Young, Sask.
 R. J. Greaves - - - - - Star City, Sask.
 T. Packer - - - - - Eston, Sask.
 C. V. Sutton - - - - - Marshall, Sask.
 H. F. Foston - - - - - Meota, Sask.
 Adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

President

Mr. F. RANDALL,
 Tisdale, Sask.

Sec.-Treas.

J. M. STROEDER,
 Pilger, Sask.